



TRAFFIC ALERT

VirginiaDOT.org

RELEASE: IMMEDIATE
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VDOT BRISTOL'S WEEKLY TRAFFIC ALERT: *December 20 - 26, 2021*

BRISTOL – In an effort to keep motorists informed, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) provides weekly information about highway construction and maintenance projects in southwestern Virginia. When traveling through highway work zones, use caution and be alert to changes in traffic patterns and slow-moving or stopped traffic.

To help motorists take the guesswork out of travel plans, call VDOT's 511 or visit <http://www.511virginia.org> for real-time traffic information.

Entries with asterisks (***) indicate the listing is new or the status of the project has changed since last week's traffic alert.

INTERSTATE PROJECTS

Interstate 81 Exit 35: A project to widen a portion of Route 107 beneath Interstate 81 at exit 35 at Chilhowie is underway. Be alert to the possibility of ramp work and periodic delays on Route 107. Watch out for highway workers in the project area. (Completion: September 2022)

*****Interstate 81 – Exit 17:** Be alert to nightly lane closures on Route 75 and Country Club Drive due to water line installation work as part of the I-81 exit 17 improvement project. Beginning December 27, Commerce Drive between Route 75 and Wonderland Drive will be closed indefinitely to begin utility construction before the new northbound on and off-ramps can be constructed. Traffic wishing to access the businesses and residences along Commerce Drive will use Gravel Lake Road for access. The new connection between Gravel Lake Road and Commerce Drive will open the week of December 20. The exit 17 project includes improvements to the exit 17 northbound on and off ramps, improvements to a segment of Route 75, reconstruction and relocation of Gravel Lake Road, lengthening the I-81 southbound on ramp, and relocation of the frontage road located adjacent to the northbound exit 17 off ramp. The speed limit is 60mph through the work zone. (Completion: Fall 2022)

Interstate 81 bridges at Atkins: A project to replace the Interstate 81 bridges near mile marker 52 in the Atkins area of Smyth County is underway. Be alert to traffic shifts through the work zone. The speed limit in the work zone is 60 mph. (Completion: Fall 2022)

I-81 Acceleration/deceleration lane projects: Be alert to narrow or closed shoulders at the following locations due to projects to extend acceleration or deceleration lanes on I-81, improving safety by providing more space to exit at an interchange or to accelerate before merging with interstate traffic:

- **Exit 19 northbound deceleration lane (Washington County):** narrowed shoulder northbound at exit 19 in the Abingdon area. (Completion: Spring 2022)
- **Exit 47 northbound acceleration lane (Smyth County):** Be alert to north and southbound delays weekdays around 2:30 p.m. due to blasting work associated with the project. Blasting work will take place weekdays through early 2022. Virginia State Police will perform traffic “slow rolls,” allowing time for the blasting to occur. (Completion: late July 2022)

*****Interstate 77 – Exit 64:** Motorists should be alert to work underway to improve Interstate 77 at exit 64 in Bland County. The project includes maintenance repairs to the I-77 bridges over Route 61 and Clear Fork Creek and improvements to the exit 64 northbound and southbound ramps. There will be no lane closures December 20 through January 3 due to the Christmas/New Year’s holidays. (Completion: May 2023)

I-77 bridges over Cove Creek: Be alert to a project to replace the Interstate 77 bridges over Cove Creek in Wythe County, located about two miles north of Interstate 81 between mile markers 44 and 42. Motorists can expect an altered traffic pattern on southbound I-77 and periodic nighttime lane closures while work is underway. (Completion: early 2023)

*****Interstates 81 and 77 maintenance activities:** This week, be alert to the following lane closures due to maintenance activities:

Interstate 81

- 24-hour bridge deck repairs southbound near exit 72 in the Wytheville area (Wythe County) from 7 a.m. Monday (December 20) through noon Thursday (December 23).

Interstate 77

- Nighttime northbound lane closure at East River Mountain Tunnel Sunday through Wednesday nights (December 19-23) this week due to tunnel maintenance. All wide loads over 12-feet must stop before entering the tunnels during the nighttime lane closures.
- Nighttime guardrail repairs northbound between mile markers 54 and 59 in Bland County December 20 and 21.

PRIMARY HIGHWAYS AND HIGH TRAFFIC SECONDARY ROADS:

Buchanan County

Hurley flooding – impacted roads: Following recent flooding in the Hurley area of Buchanan County, efforts are underway to make needed repairs on Routes 646, 647, 697 and 711. Use caution in these areas and be prepared for potential lane closures and short-term delays. Pay close attention to signs and flaggers. (Completion: late December 2021)

Route 460/121 Poplar Creek Phase A: Construction of Route 460/121 Poplar Creek Phase A is underway in Buchanan County. On September 17, the temporary closure of Route 604 (Poplar Creek Road) was lifted and the route is now open on a temporary alignment. The Poplar Creek Phase A project created a permanent change for Route 614 (Woods Fork). Access to the north and south ends of Route 614 is via Routes 609 (Bulls Creek Road) and Route 604 (Polar Creek Road), respectively, which connect to Route 460 west of Grundy.

Smyth County

Route 107 improvements – Chilhowie: A construction project is underway on Route 107 at its intersection with I-81 in the Chilhowie area of Smyth County. The project will improve how traffic moves by widening and installing a turn lane on Route 107 and the I-81 off ramps. During the project, two 11-foot-wide lanes will be open to traffic, however, there will be periodic lane closures for some operations. Due to safety concerns, pedestrian traffic will not be allowed through the work zone for the duration of the project. Motorists should expect delays during construction and are encouraged to find alternate routes. Be alert to traffic pattern changes, obey construction signs and flaggers, and use caution when driving through the work zone. (Completion: September 2021)

Route 11/107 intersection improvements – Chilhowie: A project to improve the intersection of Route 11/107 in the Chilhowie area of Smyth County is underway. Be alert to the possibility of periodic, temporary lane closures during the project. Most work will occur during daylight hours; however, there will be instances of nighttime work as needed. (Completion: late August 2022)

Route 11/Railroad Drive intersection improvements: A project to improve the intersection of Route 11/Railroad Drive in the Marion area of Smyth County is underway. Use caution in this area and be alert to flaggers. (Completion: late August 2022)

Tazewell County

*****Route 717 (Tazewell County):** The project to replace the Route 717 (Adams Drive) bridge over Bluestone River in Tazewell County begins in the coming weeks. The bridge was closed in February due to inspection findings. Until the bridge is replaced motorists will continue detouring around the bridge using Route 102 and 643, a distance of less than one mile.

Washington County

*****Route 58 widening near Damascus:** The project to widen Route 58 near Damascus in Washington County is underway. Be alert to construction teams mobilizing in the area in the coming weeks. (Completion: May 2024)

*****Route 710 (Sweet Hollow Road):** Due to the replacement of three metal pipes with concrete pipes and headwalls, the Route 710 (Sweet Hollow Road) bridge in Washington County is closed. The project located .4-mile from Route 711 and just under two miles from the Tennessee state line. Once this pipe replacement is complete, crews will move north to perform a similar project on Route 710 about 1.10 miles from Route 711. Each project will take approximately three weeks. **(Completion: December 30)**

Wise County

Shawnee Avenue bridge replacement: Due to the replacement of the Shawnee Avenue bridge in Big Stone Gap, the bridge is closed. Use caution in this area and pay close attention to detour signs. (Completion: late 2021)

Wythe County

Cove Road Bridge Detour: Due to work to replace the Cove Road bridge over Interstate 81 in Wythe County, the bridge is closed. The bridge is currently scheduled to reopen prior to Thanksgiving. Use caution in this area and pay close attention to detour signs. (Completion: Summer 2022)

Completed

Route 663 bridge replacement: Replacement of the Route 663 (Rocky Ford Road) bridge over Weaver Creek in the Artrip area of Russell County is complete.

Route 83: The project to add paved shoulders with rumble strips and to improve guardrail along Route 83 in Wise and Dickenson counties from the intersection of Route 631 (Mill Creek) near Pound to the Buchanan County line is complete. (END)